

WHAT IS A GOSPEL MEETING?

David Halbrook

Twice a year, we announce and invite you to a “Gospel Meeting.” Just like a “safety meeting” at work is a time when people meet to learn about safety, a “gospel meeting” is a time where people meet to learn about the gospel.

In Acts 13:44, most of the community met in one place to hear the gospel—a gospel meeting. In Acts 14:6, 21, Paul made two trips to a city called Derbe where he “made disciples” (Mt. 28:19) by meeting with the people and teaching the gospel—a gospel meeting.

From **April 15-20** (7:00 PM weeknights) we hope you will meet with us in the interest of learning the gospel as Bruce Reeves (Conway, AR) preaches the word. We will not be asking for your money—just for your attention since “faith comes by hearing” (Romans. 10:17). The topics of the week are available on our website today and will be printed in this space next week. For more information, contact us.

-- *Editor's Note:* Let's be busy praying and working in other ways to prepare. God will not judge this meeting as a “success” or “failure” based on outward results (attendance numbers, conversions, etc) but on whether or not we will have done what we could do. Just plant and water and leave the increase (results) to God (1 Cor. 3:6). Find the above article in our space in the *Arkansas Weekly* and do what you can do. Also, read the main article of this bulletin—it has lessons WE ALL need to know.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM.

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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WHY SEND FOR PETER?

Connie Adams

On the instruction of an angel of God, Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, sent three men to Joppa to locate Simon Peter and bring him to his house. Meanwhile, Peter had received a vision in which he was told not to call common or unclean what God had cleansed. The next day, Peter and six Jewish brethren accompanied these messengers to Caesarea to the house of the centurion. Upon arrival, they found a collection of relatives and friends of Cornelius. Peter said, “Therefore came I unto you without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?” (Acts 10:29).

That was a fair question then and it is a fair one now when brethren send for a preacher, either to come and live among them or for a gospel meeting. Sometimes the expectations of the preacher and those of the people who sent for him are not the same. Therein lies the cause of misunderstandings, friction, and sometimes division.

Why He Did Not Send For Peter

Peter did not come to be idolized, venerated, or to establish a cult built around his personality. In fact, when Cornelius fell down before Peter when he arrived, Peter quickly told him to “stand up, I myself also am a man” (v 26). There is no indication that Peter delayed for a few moments to savor this adulation. If a preacher comes to a place expecting to be put on a pedestal to be adored but never questioned, then there will be tough times ahead. There is something wrong with the view that the preacher alone is responsible for the success or failure of the work. He might well be a contributing factor in either case, but the work must *not* be built around him. Peter was a messenger of the gospel. The message was not his. He was obligated to deliver it without change.

He did not send for Peter to entertain him, his kindred or friends with bursts of eloquence, one-liners, or pitiful stories about dogs or people. The motive was much

nobler than that. Sadly, that is what untaught or worldly-minded church members often expect. They will come in droves to hear such delivered by gifted speakers but they will stay away when such adornments are missing.

He did not send for Peter to take over his own responsibilities. That is what some think the work of a preacher to be. They want an official socializer who will be visible at all the right times and places to enhance the image of the church before the world. You know, one who can convince the community that he is a “good ole boy.” They want someone to do *their* personal work for them. Some even advertise for such a man by saying, “It doesn’t matter if he is not that good in the pulpit, as long as he is a good personal worker.” Is that an advertisement for mediocrity in the pulpit? Paul told Timothy to commit what he had learned to “faithful men who shall be *able* (my emphasis, CWA) to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). Does this mean that a man is expected to do his part personally in teaching the lost, or does it mean that they are going to fulfill their work by proxy through this hired hand? Cornelius did not depend on Peter, after his arrival, to round up his relatives and friends. He did that himself.

He did not send for Peter to organize sports and entertainment for the young people. Peter was not expected to organize some sort of mountain or wilderness survival expedition or lead an adventure to see who could be the first to cross the Mediterranean in a rowboat. He was not to arrange for surfing contests down at the sea. No, his motives were higher than that.

Why Did He Send For Peter?

The angel had said to Cornelius, “He shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). That very statement told Cornelius that he and his house were lost. The means out of that peril involved the speaking of words. Notice that the angel did not tell him what to do. That was not in the divine plan. God purposed to use human agency in delivering the necessary words. “Preach the word (2 Tim. 4:2). This same Peter said once, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). Such words are of the utmost importance and urgency. They must be heard at all cost. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17).

Cornelius said, ‘Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God’ (Acts 10:33).

Observe that he sent “immediately.” It could not wait. Cornelius did his part in sending for Peter, and Peter did his part by coming, even though entering that house

violated every principle of separateness that he had always observed as a Jew. Both men showed great faith in God. The Lord’s plan was to bring a faithful preacher of the word together with a receptive audience who needed to hear and heed the message. That is how it worked with the treasurer of Ethiopia in Acts 8, with the conversion of Saul in Acts 9, with Lydia in Acts 16 and other cases of conversion in the book of Acts. That is still how it works.

Cornelius and his house were ready to “hear all things commanded thee of God.” How refreshing. If all preachers would go with the determination to deliver a “thus saith the Lord” and then had an audience with the mind-set of Cornelius and those he gathered, think of what great things could be done for the Lord. Maybe I am missing something, but it appears to me that many congregational troubles, along with great stress in the lives of preachers, could be avoided if both the congregation and the preacher could recapture the mind-set of those who gathered at the house of that Gentile officer.

Do you have a preacher living and working among you? Why did you send for him? Preacher, why did you go? (Truth Magazine, April 2012, p4-5)

FIND THE SCRIPTURE

David Halbrook

Can you find any of the following items in Scripture?

- * The apostles teaching about an annual celebration of Jesus’ resurrection.
- * An annual seven-day period called “Holy week.”
- * Any Christian preparing for Palm Sunday.
- * A church-led religious season called “Lent.”
- * Any Christian celebrating Jesus’ resurrection on a day called “Easter.”
- * Jesus establishing a “holy calendar” for His church.
- * A diligent Christian who forsook his brethren who assembled together.

Has it occurred to you that the body of Christ in the New Testament never held an annual religious holiday in memory of Jesus’ resurrection? Did the apostles ever teach anyone to observe Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday? Scripture equips the church for its work in the truth (1 Tim. 3:15; 2 Tim. 3:16-17) but never attaches these days to the religion Jesus Christ revealed.

What we do read is Christians taught not to forsake the *assembling of ourselves together* (Heb. 10:24-25). If you have learned that Easter is the product of human tradition, how are you doing with the instruction found above in Hebrews?